

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANTANA 01516 221419Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1516

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, MA, US
SUBJECT: CHARGE'S CALL ON MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND COMMERCE

REFS: (A) ANTANANARIVO 1448; (B) STATE 186663

1. SUMMARY. MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND COMMERCE JUSTIN RARIVOSON TOLD CHARGE ON AUGUST 19 THAT HE HOPED INSTALLATION OF A PERMANENT GOVERNMENT MEANT THAT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR (DRM) COULD NOW GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, INCLUDING THE RESOLUTION OF BILATERAL US/DRM ISSUES. HE HOPED FOR EARLY NEGOTIATING ON COMPENSATION TO THE NATIONALIZED AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES, AND CONFIDED THAT B-747 PURCHASE WAS NEARING COMPLETION. END SUMMARY.

2. I TOLD THE MINISTER THAT I WAS PLEASED TO BE MAKING MY FIRST CALL ON A MEMBER OF THE NEW CABINET, FOR WE HAD HOPES THAT WITH THE ADVENT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT PROGRESS MIGHT NOW BE MADE TOWARD THE SETTLEMENT OF CERTAIN BILATERAL PROBLEMS WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THE MINISTER PICKED THIS UP RIGHT AWAY SAYING HE TOO HOPED THAT THE END OF THE "POLITICAL PERIOD" COULD NOW PERMIT PROGRESS IN ALL FIELDS, INCLUDING THAT OF BILATERAL US/DRM RELATIONS IN WHICH THE PROBLEMS WERE NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED. AS HE WAS HIMSELF A BUSINESSMAN, NOT A POLITICIAN, HE WAS GLAD THAT A PERMANENT GOVERNMENT WAS IN PLACE SO THAT HE COULD NOW
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CONCENTRATE ON THE MANY SCHEMES HE HAD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY.

3. ON RELATIONS WITH US, MINISTER SAID THAT DRM PURCHASE OF B-747 WAS AT THAT VERY MOMENT BEING DISCUSSED BY THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (SRC). BOTH THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE PRESIDENT HAD APPROVED THE TERMS OF THE

TRANSACTION, AND HE THOUGHT THE SRC WOULD QUICKLY GIVE FINAL APPROVAL.

4. THE MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT HE EXPECTED SOON TO CONTACT ALL THE NATIONALIZED OIL COMPANIES AND INVITE THEM TO SUBMIT COMPLETE DOCUMENTED CLAIMS FOR COMQNSATION. SO FAR ONLY THE FRENCH COMPANY TOTAL HAD SUBMITTED ANYTHING LIKE A CLAIM, THE OTHER COMPANIES HAVING MERELY SUBMITTED FRAGMENTARY DATA OR REQUESTS FOR MORE INFORMATION. HE WAS SORRY THAT MOBIL OIL, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN OPERATING IN MADAGASCAR AND THEREFORE WAS NOT A VICTIM OF NATIONALIZATION, HAD BEEN LOW BIDDER ON AN EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT TO SUPPLY MADAGASCAR WITH LUBRICANTS AND TO MANAGE THE PRODUCTION OF LUBRICANTS AT THE TAMATAVE REFINERY. HAD ONE OF THE NATIONALIZED AMERICAN FIRMS OBTAINED THE CONTRACT, THIS COULD HAVE USEFULLY FIGURED IN THE COMPENSATION NEGOTIATIONS AS THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT COULD HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MAKE IT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS AND THUS PROVIDE THE FIRM IN QUESTION AT LEAST THIS TYPE OF COMPENSATION FOR ITS NATIONALIZED PROPERTIES.

5. RARIVOSON'S COMMENTS ON MADAGASCAR'S SALES OF COFFEE TO BRAZIL, WHICH I RAISED, ARE COVERED IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM. BARRETT

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